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Notes on the Old Testament

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1. יֵגֶר, Gen. 31 47.

The Jewish temple at Elephantine is called in Papyrus E, l. 14, and J, l. 16 (Sayce and Cowley's publication), אֵנוּרָא. The word has given rise to various explanations. Nöldeke has noted the possible derivation from Assyrian *ēkurru*; Syriac *eggārā*, "roof," has been suggested; and most recently Sachau argues for the active formation *āgôrā*, as in Syriac, the "assembler," hence "assembly," comparing Arabic *īāmī*, "mosque."¹ Preferring to remain in the field of the elder Aramaic I suggest identification with Rabbinic אֵינוֹר, "heap, hill," which is used in the Targums for a heathen altar; so the Targum to 2 Ki. 21 3 renders בָּמוֹת. The word is then to be associated with יֵגֶר, Gen. 31 47, in יֵגֶר שְׂדֵרוֹתָא, "heap of witness," there rendered into Hebrew by גִּל. If יֵגֶר is of *ḵatl*-formation, as the Massora points it, it is related to אֵנוּרָא as Syriac *ḵabrā* to *ḵebôrā*, with the softening of ' to א; if it should be pointed יֵגֶר, it is the same word, *ā* having become *ô*. With the root-meaning of a heap, יֵגֶר-אֵנוּרָא corresponds in meaning to Hebrew בָּמָה, primarily a "height" (*e.g.* Dt. 32 13). Both words experienced the same development in meaning, coming to be used of the sacred mound or elevation, then of the precinct, and finally of the temple reared there. בָּמָה appears to be used in the latter sense in 1 Ki. 11 7; more accurately the structure is a בֵּית בָּמָה, *e.g.* 12 31. We may compare the like development of denotation in Arabic *masjīd* and Latin *templum*. The Aramaic-speaking Jews of Elephantine were thus using the Aramaic equivalent

¹ *Aramäische Papyrus*, 1911, pp. xxiii f.

of the Hebrew **במה** for their Yahwe-temple. What relation this native Aramaic word **יִנְר-אִנּוּרָא** has to Assyrian *ékurru*, I leave to Assyriologists to determine. There may have occurred in this case one of the numerous artificial assimilations of Semitic and Sumerian words.²

2. **שִׁים עַל**, 1 Ki. 20 12.

This technical term for attacking a city has its exact parallel in the Syriac; *e.g.* in the Ecclesiastical History of John of Ephesus, in Gottheil and Jastrow's *Semitic Study Series*, xiii, p. 17, l. 2, and p. 34, l. 6. The phrase in the latter passage, **כִּם עַל מְרִינְתָא**, is identical with the Hebrew. There can be no objection in finding the same meaning for **שִׁים** in 1 Sam. 15 2. Compare English "set at, make a set at," and Dr. Cobb cites for me a word of Prince Hal to Falstaff: "We two saw you four set on four."

3. Sukkoth-benoth, 2 Ki. 17 30.

It occurred to me several years ago that the original reading for this obscure phrase was best represented by the Greek text B, which has **Ροχχωθβαυειθει**; **ροχ** is for **δοχ**, a mutilation of **Μαρδुक**, and **βαυειθει** is an abbreviation of the name of the Babylonian goddess Zer-p(b)anitim. Stade, I find, has made the same suggestion in the Polychrome Bible, *ad loc.* There remains for explanation the syllable **-oth-**. This doubtless represents an original **וֹאֵת**, so that the text primarily read: And the Babylonians made (or better, worshiped) **אֵת מֶרְדֵּךְ וֹאֵת (וֹר) בְּנִית**.

4. The barbarous syllables in Is. 28 10.

Duhm in his brisk fashion has correctly criticised the current interpretation of these words as "precept upon precept, . . . line upon line, . . ." He would understand them as onomatopoetic sounds taken from some proverbial phraseology. May these syllables be a pedagogic by-word taken from the schoolmaster's instruction in teaching the alphabet? "Šade

² This note was read at the meeting of the Society in December, 1910. Professor Margolis has briefly made the same suggestion for identity of **אִנּוּרָא** and **יִנְר** in *JQR*, N.S. ii, 427.

for Šade, Kof for Kof," so we might say, but in this passage may be preserved elder or variant names of the letters **ש** and **ק** (cf. the names of **ו** and **ת**). The sing-song phrase may have attached itself to these letters because of their raucous rhyming. This interpretation would be in agreement with the pedagogic character of the chapter, and would heighten the contrast in the reference to "the strange lips and other tongue" with which Yahwe threatens to teach his people.

5. **חֹזֶה**, Is. 28 15.

In his paper entitled *Ro'eh and Hozeh in the Old Testament*, in the JOURNAL for 1909, p. 42, Dr. Jastrow argued that both these terms originally connoted divination; he showed that **רֹאֶה** is the *barû* of the Babylonian, the practitioner of intentional auspices, and **חֹזֶה** is the observer of accidental omens. Jastrow discussed in this paper every important instance of **חֹזֶה** but one, the present case.

In this passage the commentators have endeavored to understand **חֹזֶה** as though it referred to a "vision" obtained with Hell, *i.e.* some necromantic rite. But it is evident that **חֹזֶה** is synonymous with the parallel **בְּרִית**, even as the Greek understood them, — *διαθήκη* . . . *συνθήκη* (Sym. *συνθήκη* in both places). But Jastrow's discussion gives a clue to the understanding of **חֹזֶה** in our passage. This word and its parallel **בְּרִית** denote a covenant founded upon, consecrated by, auspices. Our verse then presents the two roots *barû* and **חֹזֶה**, of which the latter is to the former as, according to Jastrow's thesis, **חֹזֶה** is to **רֹאֶה**, which, with Jastrow, equals *barû*. This equation further reflects corroboration upon the derivation suggested by Jensen for the connection of Hebrew **בְּרִית** with Babylonian *barû*, used of auspices.³ Our biblical verse not only gives us a hitherto misunderstood word from the vocabulary of divination, but also unconsciously offers the etymology for the much discussed **בְּרִית**.

There remains the discussion of the form of the word,

³ See Haupt in the JOURNAL, 1900, 59. It may be noted that this derivation for **בְּרִית** is not to be found in Kraetzschmar's monograph, *Die Bundesvorstellung*, 1896, in the articles on "Covenant," in *HDB* and *EB*, nor in the Oxford Dictionary.

which is pointed as the *Kal* active ppl. ; cf. ראה, v. 7. The pointing is impossible ; the word is to be equated with (the aramaizing?) חוות of v. 18, to which it bears the same relation as גולה to גלות. Accordingly point חוה, ראה (v. 7), and read probably חותכם, v. 18.

6. מבלי, Am. 5 9.

The usual interpretation of this verb connects it with the three biblical instances of the root בלנ, "be cheerful, smile," with which are to be associated the names בלנה and בלני, denoting the deity's complaisant demeanor (cf. יצחק). The corresponding Arabic root *balaja*, *balija*, means "be bright, joyous," the original idea being possibly that of the breaking of the dawn, in which case בלנ is a variation of the more common theme פלנ. But the usual rendering, "he flashes destruction upon the strong," is too forced an interpretation to commend itself to the present writer. I propose therefore to connect the verb with Arabic *walaja*, "come in," so that our Hifil is exactly parallel with יביא (so to be read for יבוא) in the parallel limb of the verse. *Walaja* is itself also to be connected with the theme פלנ, proceeding from the meaning "divide, break open," to that of "entering." *PLG*, *BLG*, *WLG*, are thus variations of the same theme. A parallel is to be found in the Hebrew verbs מלט, פלט (occurring only in the derived stems), with which is to be connected Assyrian *balātu*, "live," for which, so far as I know, no connections have been established by the Assyriologists. The two Hebrew verbs, in the first stem, had the sense of "getting off with one's life."

7. הכל, Eccles. 11 5, etc.

Some instances outside of the Hebrew sphere may be adduced to Dr. Cobb's interesting paper on הכל as practically "the universe," in the JOURNAL, 1910, 24. In the Assyrian we have *Ea bān kala*, "Creator of the universe," Hilprecht, *Assyriaca*, 18 ; *Sala* as goddess *ša kullati*, Delitzsch, *Handwörterbuch*, 331 ; the proper name *Sin-li'i-kullati*, "Sin is powerful over all," Tallquist, *Neobabylon. Namenbuch*, 319 ; and the royal title *lugal kalammu*, "king of the whole

(world)," Thureau-Dangin, *Die sumer. u. akkad. Königsinschriften*, 152. In the Syriac the divine title כּל־מֶרָא, "lord of all," is frequently found, e.g. in the Life of St. Ephrem, Brockelmann, *Syr. Gramm.*, Chrestomathy, p. 26, and Thomas of Marga, *Book of Governors*, ed. Budge, p. 28, l. 21, *et passim*, here always written as one word. I may compare a similar epithet in one of the emperor Julian's orations, ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν ὅλων "Ἡλῖος, cited by Cumont, *Oriental Religions*, 258, n. 80, from Hertlein's ed., *Or.* iv, p. 203, 5. Shamash, the Babylonian sun god, is also hailed as god of all, Jastrow, *Rel. Bab. u. Ass.*, i, 254.

8. The interrogative particle מִי or מַה.

In the JOURNAL for 1904, p. 95, the writer suggested that מִי in Am. 7 2, Ruth 3 16, is an interrogative particle, corresponding to Latin *num*, Greek *μή*. The same use is required for מַה in Jer. 2 5: מַה מַּצְאוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בִּי עוֹל, generally translated: "What falseness have your fathers found"; but this demands מַה עוֹל. Translate: "Did your fathers find falseness in me?" In the same way may be understood the unique expression in Dt. 5 23: מִי כָל בָּשָׂר וְגו', universally translated, "Who is there of all flesh who has heard," etc. But then we should have מִי מִן, as in Gen. 21 8. The difficulty is avoided by taking מִי as the interrogative: "Has any flesh heard?" It may be observed that the interrogative pronoun, used exclamatorily, has become a negative particle, as already in classical Hebrew, and then an interrogative particle.

9. The correlative use of כִּי and אֲכֵן.

The most natural translation of כִּי in Is. 62 5: כִּי יִבְעַל בְּנִיךָ, is "as," — "as a young man marries a virgin," etc. The commentators who translate it "for" have to supply the necessary "as," while Lagarde, recognizing the difficulty, proposed כִּבְעַל (see Duhm, *ad loc.*). Further, כִּי is to be translated as "so," in Job 6 21, כִּי עֲתָה, לִי הֵייתָם (reading לִי for לוֹ); here כִּי is supposed by some translators to be an error for כֵּן, but unnecessarily. These

cases prepare the way for observing the correlative use of **כִּי** and **כֵּן** in Is. 55 9: **כִּי נִבְהִין שָׁמַיִם מֵאֲרֶץ כֵּן נִבְהִין דְּרָכֵי**; cf. the immediately following correlation in v. 10 f., **כֵּן . . . כֹּאשֶׁר**. Again, **כִּי . . . כִּי** may possibly be taken as correlatives in Job 31 11 f., *i.e.* "as it is a felony, so it is a fire that burns even to hell." But the usage is more evident in Gen. 18 20, where Yahwe says, **וְעַתָּה סָדָם וְעֹמֶרְהָ כִּי רַבָּה וְהַטָּאתָם כִּי כְבֹדָה מֵאֲדָר**. The translation of RV, "because . . . and because," misses the terse rhetoric. Also the preferable rendering of **כִּי** as an asseverative particle (*e.g.* Dillmann, Gunkel) evades the logic of the passage, for the Deity is thereby represented as forestalling his inquisition (v. 21) with a verdict. Rather he is depicted as drawing a *prima facie* conclusion from the fame of Sodom and Gomorrah's iniquity: "as the bruit of them is great, so is (must be) their sin grievous." That is, there is enough evidence, as with a grand jury, to call for an indictment and lead to a judicial examination.

This correlative use of **כִּי** is etymologically the same as that of the preposition **בְּ**, *e.g.* in **כַּעֲם כִּכְהֵן**. The basis of both the conjunction and the preposition is a demonstrative element (see Duval, *Grammaire syriaque*, 164), which lends itself to correlation, as in the case of "here and there"; an exact equivalent to this correlative use of a demonstrative element is found in the English "the . . . the" in comparisons.

Correlation is also evidently expressed by **אֲכֵן . . . כֵּן** in Jer. 3 20: "As a woman is false to her lover, so have you been false to me." Just below in v. 23 **אֲכֵן . . . אֲכֵן** may possibly be used in the same way: "Just as in vain are the hills, etc., so in Yahwe is Israel's help." **אֲכֵן** in these cases is to be connected with the Syriac *aikan*, "as" (which actually occurs in an Aramaic magical inscription from Nippur as **אִיכֵן**). For *â-ken* from *ai-ken*, cf. *ân* from *ain*, "where." Etymologically the proper correlative particles would be **כֵּן . . . אֲכֵן**, as in Jer. 3 20, but confusion has probably arisen in the literary tradition.⁴ Further, **אֲכֵן** in 1 Ki. 11 2 may be

⁴ Cf. Haupt's notes on **לִכֵּן** and **בֵּן**, *JBL*, 1910, 104.

the same word. Stade, *SBOT*, *ad loc.*, would change it to פִּי on the strength of the Greek *μή*. But the Greek may be right without faulting the Hebrew. אֵיכֶן, like the Syriac אֵיכֶן and the Latin *ut*, may have come to denote purpose or end.